

**S**oetry  
Society

# SPARE MULE

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# President's Corner



Dear fellow poets,

I hope you've had happy holidays and a year full of poetry! It's hard to believe that began my President's Poetry Challenge twelve short months ago. Thanks to all who have participated in my challenges. I have enjoyed reading your work over the past year, and I look forward to the poems to come.

Since I challenged you with the pantoum form last January, it seems only fitting that we now try its close relative, the villanelle. I'm sure many of you are well-versed with this form. As a reminder, a villanelle is a nineteen-line poem consisting of five tercets, one quatrain, two repeated refrains, and a rhyme scheme. Visually, the form looks like this, with a and b indicating the rhymes and the superscript numbers indicating the two repeated refrains: A<sup>1</sup>bA<sup>2</sup> abA<sup>1</sup> abA<sup>2</sup> abA<sup>1</sup> abA<sup>2</sup> abA<sup>1</sup>A<sup>2</sup>. There is no required meter, though contemporary villanelles often employ pentameter.

My new year's confession is that in the past, I've never been able write a villanelle without becoming so frustrated that I've given up. However, after writing the villanelle below, I think I finally like the form. As with my other challenge poems, I enjoy pushing the form's boundaries and playing with its repeated elements.

I cannot write a villanelle—  
the words won't come,  
the rhyme too big to tell

my sorrow. The poem is a well  
I dig and drill before I plumb  
its depths. I cannot write a villanelle,

cannot seem to fit inside its shell  
no matter how I curl and twist. I'm mum,  
its rhymes and lines too big to tell

it as it is. I try to weave a lyric spell,  
but my tongue, both dumb and numb,  
will never write a villanelle

in winter when the morning is a cell  
of ice and only wrens can hum and thrum  
their rhymes. A bird's too big to tell

the ways of woman. Perhaps in spring I'll yell  
my words into the dawn, though I suspect some

things impossible. I tried to build a villanelle.  
I tried to sing my heart (too small to write or tell).

Blessings to all and a Happy New Year,

Carla

# Kudos



From **Lebanon Poets Society**:

Kudos to past MSPS president Nancy LaChance for publication in *Distilled Lives* (IL State Poetry Society publication). In addition, LaChance placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in Poetry Society of Tennessee for their 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual contest in two categories: Knoxville Award and Western Women Award.

John J. Han is the translator of *My Wife Is Smiling and Other Poems by Oh Se Ju* (Cyberwit, 2018) and author of *More Thunder Thighs: Haiku Musings on the English Language* (Cyberwit, 2018). Jo A. Baldwin's review of Han's book *Four-Character Proverbs: A Primer for Confucian Living in Chinese, Korean, and English* (Cyberwit, 2018) appears in *Valley Voices: A Literary Review* (Fall 2018). In 2018, Han's poems were published in a number of periodicals and anthologies, such as *Cave Region Review*, *Failed Haiku*, *Taj Mahal Review*, *World Haiku Review*, and *Haiku Page*. The 2018 issue of *Haiku Page* also includes his essay "Short but Long-Lasting: A Haiku to Ponder."

Velvet Fackeldey, **Lebanon Poets' Society**, was invited to submit to the anthology *Eclectica*. They accepted four poems, two short stories, and a novella. Publication is scheduled for February.

Sandra L. Knife will release a book of 50 poems, *POET ON HOLD*, coming out in March 2019. It'll be on Amazon.

From Sarah Tarrant:

**Photographer's note:** "As we move from 2018 to 2019, we are leaving behind old memories and moving on to new places. These photos are of an old farm in Bolivar, MO. It is complete with a barn, main house, and slaves' quarters. This farm used to be a place to live and thrive, but now it is a tattered memory—a place one used to live but now can't. Those that lived there have moved on."

## 2018 MSPS Summer Contest Winners

### Category 1 Rhymed or Blank Verse

1 <sup>st</sup> - Nick Sweet:	"Decent/Descent" Shepherd, TX
2 <sup>nd</sup> -Karen Kay Bailey:	"Reprieve in Reflection" Blanchard, OK
3 <sup>rd</sup> -John Crawford:	"The Violet" Hot Springs, AR
1 <sup>st</sup> H.M.-Catherine Moran;	"Capture the Moment" Little Rock, AR
2 <sup>nd</sup> H.M.-Becky Alexander:	"September" Cambridge, Ontario, Canada
3 <sup>rd</sup> J.M.-Dr. Emory D. Jones:	"Moonstruck" Iuka. MS

### Category 2 Free Verse

1 <sup>st</sup> - Christopher Chubb	"Untitled" DeSoto, MO
2 <sup>nd</sup> -LaVern Spencer McCarthy:	"Bereaved" Blair, OK
3 <sup>rd</sup> -John Han:	"The Fat Buddha" Manchester, MO
1 <sup>st</sup> H. M.-Mary L. Permann:	"Gainfully Employed" Grimes. IA
2 <sup>nd</sup> H.M.- Becky Alexander:	"September (a lament)" Cambridge, Ontario, Canada
3 <sup>rd</sup> H.M.Terry Jude Miller	"Abdullah's Lament" Richmond, TX

### Category 3 Humorous

1 <sup>st</sup> -LaVern Spencer McCarthy	"Why Grandpa Smiles" Blair, OK
2 <sup>nd</sup> - Barbara Blanks	"The Ballad of Four-Eyes Drifer Mose" Garland. TX
3 <sup>rd</sup> -Sara Gipson	"To Dance on Water" Scott, AR
1 <sup>st</sup> H.M.-Dr. Emory D. Jones	"Good Taste in Pirate" IUKA. MS
2 <sup>nd</sup> H.M.- LaVern Spencer McCarthy	"Those Brussels Sprouts" Blair. OK
3 <sup>rd</sup> H.M.-Becky Alexander	"Sometimes, A Dragon" Cambridge, Ontario, Canada

### Category 4 Summer

1 <sup>st</sup> Sally Clark	" Summer Fruit" Fredericksburg, TX
2 <sup>nd</sup> Terry Jude Miller	"Listening to Lightning Bugs" Richmond, TX
3 <sup>rd</sup> -Barbara Blanks	"A Splash of Artistry" Garland, TX
1 <sup>st</sup> H.M. Becky Alexander	"Visit to Drumheller" Cambridge, Ontario, Canada
2 <sup>nd</sup> H.M. Faye Adams	"We Pull the Weeds" Cherokee Village, AR
3 <sup>rd</sup> H.M. Pat Laster	"Connections"

### Category 5 MSPS Members Only

1 <sup>st</sup> -Barbara Blanks	"There's No Pony" Garland, TX
2 <sup>nd</sup> -Karen Kay Bailey	"A Daughter's Lament" Blanchard, OK
3 <sup>rd</sup> -Nick Sweet	"Victory Dance 1945" Shepherd, TX

1 <sup>st</sup> H.M.-Karen Kay Bailey TX	"Only a Reflection of the Believer" Blanchard.
2 <sup>nd</sup> H.M.-Llewellyn Sellers Brawner MO	"Summer Evening at the Chautauqua" Nixa,
3 <sup>rd</sup> H.M.-Karen Kay Bailey	"A Closed Passage" Blanchard, OK

# Chapter Updates



## The Bad and Good of **On the Edge**:

Since I missed sending a report for the last issue, I guess that is my bad, I need to make up for it.

It was suggested at a meeting that people often say, my bad, but never my good. Well,...

Anyway, on to the report. Do I have anything to say about our group. Oh, yesssss. Christopher Chubb won in the Summer Contest. His Good. He wrote a wonderful poem and it is printed in the last issue of *The Grist*. His good again.

Faye Adams also won in the Summer Contest. Her Good. She and Bill, her hubby, attended the MSPS Conference this summer. It was Good to see them.

While, the Horstman's, Carol and Don, are always busy creating various art: metal, paintings and poems. In September they displayed their crafts at the Queeny art fair. They have more art fairs and art exhibits coming up in the spring. That's their Good.

John Han is planning to write and write and write and write, count those writes and that's how many books he has planned. He is doing this in between teaching and seminars. Another, Good. Plus, he put out a beautiful issue of *Cantos*, the Missouri Baptist University Literary Magazine. There were several MSPS poets with published work. All good.

Anna Wells has been busy with a new grandchild. Congratulation and Good Grandma.

Juanita Wittu and Kim Lehnhoff have joined us at our meetings and offered many good suggestions about some of the writing. They're Good.

Terrie Jacks can often be found at some open mics reading her unique form of poetry. One might say outstanding in the field since she is often the only one reading poems among many singers. Oh, my goodness, her Good.

Also, both John Han and Terrie Jacks have been published in *Failed Haiku* and the *Oasis Journal 2018*. Also, very Good.

So, things are looking up. You should try that. Looking up. But be careful if you do it under a tree full of birds. My bad.

~~~~~

**Author Unknown** is decreasing its namesake by sending out poems. Each semester, members select six poems (minimum) to journey into the eyes of editors across the planet. It is always exciting when letters of acceptance or rejection arrive.

We will be preparing for the Casebolt Project upcoming in April. This year, students from the College of Music, Arts, and Letters will respond to "Village Suite," a student musical score. There are six movements. Imagine the possibilities. You can join us to experience this event April 9, 7:30 PM in the Casebolt Recital Hall.

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**The Merry Bombadils** are fully engaged in an EIEIO poetry project that is in its second round of poem submissions and critiques. We are hoping to add a few members-at-large to our very diverse and far flung group. So, if any of the Members-at-Large are interested, feel free to contact Teresa Klepac at [howardt@missouri.edu](mailto:howardt@missouri.edu). An EIEIO poem consists of 5 lines that start with EIEIO and has an unmetred rhyme scheme of ABABB. 5 of our poets have submitted and are in the critique phase, which is being done through the U.S. Mail. We hope to have a few others join in this project, which was the brain child of Carol Louise Moon. We are also updating our mailing lists (both snail mail and email). Looking forward to sharing poetry both with our chapter members and other MSPS poets.

# Sestinas



## **The Art of Patience -- Laurence W. Thomas**

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Frustration is great and we look for solutions to molasses methods of making things move and so much sweat. Labor-saving devices were first, like elevators, washers and dryers, and wrinkle-free shirts. Telephones became remote and typewriter ribbons gave way to printers and modems. Cars and jets replace shanks'-mare travel so everyone arrives before they get there as such time-zone travel creates more problems with jet-lag than solutions. An exchange of letters that once took weeks found a way of happening in less than an hour, and we are moved to outrage when it takes longer. In order to free us from two-day deliveries, we developed drones so we could be first to receive packages with no advantage gained by being first. The luxuries of voyages to Europe are lost when we can travel in lightning-fast, super jets providing us with plenty of free time to do pretty much what we'd be doing at home. Solutions follow putative needs irrespective of whether they move us forward or merely satisfy our fancies in a self-fulfilling way. We once waited for the newspaper to learn of disasters or far-away events, glued ourselves to the radio so we could be the first to know about them. Now they are splayed out in real-time 3-D, moving across our walls in Orwellian fulfillment, a kind of dream-travel reality. The hiatus between challenges and their resolutions shrinks with inventions leaving us no longer free to dawdle over answers. The time we save should leave us free to indulge ourselves pursuing happiness, not the way corporations meet in exotic places seeking solutions that could be found by televised conference calls. If the first order of business is cocktails after reading the minutes, why travel so far combining business with pleasure? Let the moveable feast be set to accommodate our own calendars and not move according to lunar irregularities. We should always have the freedom

to make our own decisions unless they involve danger like traveling  
and texting or having iPhone conversations on the highway.  
We don't always have to be the very first,  
and it doesn't hurt to take our time when looking for solutions.

In seeking solutions, we need not be first.  
There are other ways to move  
toward freedom: roads less traveled.

## **NON-SESTINAS – Terrie Jacks**

I TRIED TO WRITE A SESTINAS  
BUT IT HAS TOO MANY LINES  
I'M SORRY IT MALFUNCTIONED  
AND I DIDN'T TAKE THE TIME  
BUT I DID WRITE THIS MESS  
MANAGED THESE WEIRD LINES

THERE ISN'T ANY MORE  
EIGHT IS ALL YOU'LL FIND.

## In Times of Plenty, El Salvador – Carol Louise Moon

Two oxen, and an ox cart too,  
a pile of kindling bound and rounded  
by cloth tarp—cart wheels of wood.  
They'd hitched their two gray  
oxen to a *carreta* with water  
jugs strapped on. We'd guessed

they were headed home—guessed  
wrong . This elderly couple, two  
brothers, ventured out; enough water  
to drink for a week, a well-rounded  
visit to Cerro Verde to stay with graying  
Tia *solterona*. The cart of wood

also held a bundle of twigs and wood  
for Tia's wood stove, we'd guessed.  
The home of *hombres mayores* with gray  
tin roof collapsed, crops, too—  
they left for drier ground; rounded  
the old church, headed to where water

was less plentiful, where no rainwater  
flooded *canton* in El Salvador. Would  
they be gone a full-rounded  
month? Others had guessed  
longer. *Los aldeanos*, tin roofers, too,  
had put in their wagers: gray

coins. Now thundering gray  
*temporales* threatened more water  
dumped onto roads. Wells, too—  
though filling of wells was good, would  
be plenty for summer, we guessed.

A full teaspoon of luck rounded

with prayer! The men rounded  
*la colina* just as clouds, thick and gray  
appeared as unwelcomed guests.  
Oxen plodded through slick water,  
loaded down with jugs and wood,  
the burden almost too

much. We rounded a *plaza*—so water-  
logged and gray-cast—in our own wood  
*carreta*, and guessed we'd be leaving, too.

## **A Day Good Writing Went South – Todd Sukany**

The sestina rises like a mountain before  
six weary travelers. These travelers were hacked  
into a path through the jungle protecting  
the Amazon River, or maybe just Dry Gulch Creek a mile  
from the house. No Matterhorn. Scales, pre-stanzas per say, fly off  
the pen of the writer, not unlike those of the voracious piranha.

Gnawing flesh to the bone like red-bellied piranha,  
poets revise one stanza at a time until a dinner is plated. Before  
one stanza follows another, horrification ensues as a taut line flies off  
and the poet must drag out, affix, a new lure. Another salty bard hacked.  
Hacked since each stanza requires end words in a specific order. A mile  
of wild oaths, vulgarity cuts a new path. This form needs no protecting.

This form must have been dreamt by some thirteenth-century Daniel, protecting  
his gothic innocence. Daniel himself, an enigmatic-word piranha,  
should have been fasting, but instead he raced mile after mile  
away from debt collectors. Alas, I digress. A good fast before  
his "jester time" would have occupied life with other matters of equally hacked  
and unearthly quality, preventing eight centuries of torture from weekdays off.

One must have weekdays off  
to write such verse, protecting  
the form into and past the twentieth century. Reader, hacked  
off yet? Medieval men wore skirts, or armour. Reader, remember piranha?  
By now you must insist that no armour-bearing man or woman--before  
the Age of Enlightenment, or accountability--of any weight would write a mile

of words, in or out of an Amazonian wilderness. Thirty-nine lines, a mile  
of words slowly carved out. Really, a mile of words? Off  
the scale. No sensible person plates a sestina before  
others--no benefit in protecting  
them from its mind-devouring piranha

who have ravenously hacked

a path with a machete in one fin, an ink quill in the other, sanely hacked out six stanzas in preparation for the envoi. A good writer fishes out a mile of words, in fact six miles. A feudal writer feels the teeth of editing piranha confident the ink will flow and the paper, lambskin, or fishskin filleted off will stink to high heaven. And yet, a troubadour of St. Sestina rests protecting the Envoi. The Envoi. The Envoi. A Convoy of Hope before

a sestina of lean piranha leads hungry readers through a hacked set of six, forced stanzas, before travelers pile mile after mile to where shame jumps off the ship of sanity into an envoi barely worth protecting.

## **GENESIS REVISITED -- Wanda Sue Parrott**

Most newborn babes weren't yet aware of life;  
they simply lived, as plants are simply green.  
Each infant slept and woke, then fed and wept.  
Your early waking hours were but a dream  
in which you sensed the songs DNA sang  
like old trees heard the wind before it died.

A tree does not declare "the wind has died,"  
although all plants are sensitive to life.  
Did living things rejoice when Nature sang?  
Did vibratory primal tones go green  
when single cells evolved, thus turning dream  
into four elements your mama wept?

Earth Mother's mists were seas. Her oceans wept.  
and from her liquid womb life surged, then died.  
This pattern stayed the same, whereas the dream  
then broadened into myriad forms of life  
in spectral hues that ranged from gold to green  
with scales in harmonies your orb-cells sang.

From earth, from fire, from liquid--gases sang  
in primal vibratones, formed mists that wept  
while oozing forth. Your predecessor green  
was slime, prevertebraic spawn that died,  
replaced by trees whose trunks gave rise to life.  
Your branch is but a family in this dream

Conceived by mind, you could do naught but dream  
in fluctal-fluid consciousness that sang,  
whose parent-primatones brought forth all life.  
You, by life's nature—homeless--so you wept;-  
not you alone, but all that lived and died

while swaddled in Genetics' Garden Green

From air, and oceans blue and forests green  
evolved from single cells mortals who dream  
who know not whence they came once they have died,  
who sense infinitones of ONE who sang  
the songs of its Creation as it wept—  
and you evolved from green, to death, to life.

Most babes have died not yet aware that life  
is dream-swirl, murkied chaos. Jesus wept.  
Were green tears man's--or Father's--mists he sang?

## **ON THE FRONT LINES--Pat Laster**

Daily, teachers serve--like slaves--in silence, anxious, fearful. Students claim a victory acting out (no consequential combat), hurling broken-pencil missiles rearward, stabbing, jabbing, needling. Governmental groups protect these rights from inner chambers.

Miscreants in isolation chambers leave a blessed teaching-learning silence. Parents scream to local governmental entities, claim child abuse, a victory ready-made when Judge agrees. "Go rearward, teacher! Shame!" (Such scars are hard to combat.)

Treading tactfully in fields of combat, most are cautious: "Teach me? My gun chamber's loaded. Leave me be. I'll sit here rearward, hear my head-phoned pop-man rap in silence. I don't need to know about Winged Victory; I don't care about three governmental

branches." Annually, a governmental agency demands improvement: "Combat antiquated teaching modes for victory meeting Goals 2000." Schoolboard chambers ring refrains: "No money!" Deafened silence follows. (Helpful programs shunted rearward.)

"Obligations keep us sliding rearward. Children cost so! Why don't governmental panels pay for private schooling?" Silence that complaint with funding? Will it combat sloth? Role models, mentors, study chambers, homework centers might. Who judges victory

over drugs and ignorance? What victory? Real-world skills-base set against the rearward-facing course of those schoolboards whose chambers fill with special interests? Governmental strings and under-funded mandates combat change and creativity with silence.

Safe in ivied chambers, governmental edicts roll from rearward. Front-line combat

kills morale. No victory cry, just silence.

-- Merry Bombadils

# Other Poems



## **AT AN EVENT – Laurence W. Thomas**

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Each bystander has a personal formula,  
a prayer or incantation,  
some superstition that makes them seem  
a part of the struggle.

You'd think they had taken the field  
the way they explode into the streets  
when the final whistle blows  
rubbing the noses  
of an enemy they've never met  
into the steaming pile of its failure, a foe  
who, instead of limping off with sad faces,  
should be the ones tearing up the town  
but joy is reckless, and defeat  
ominously silent.

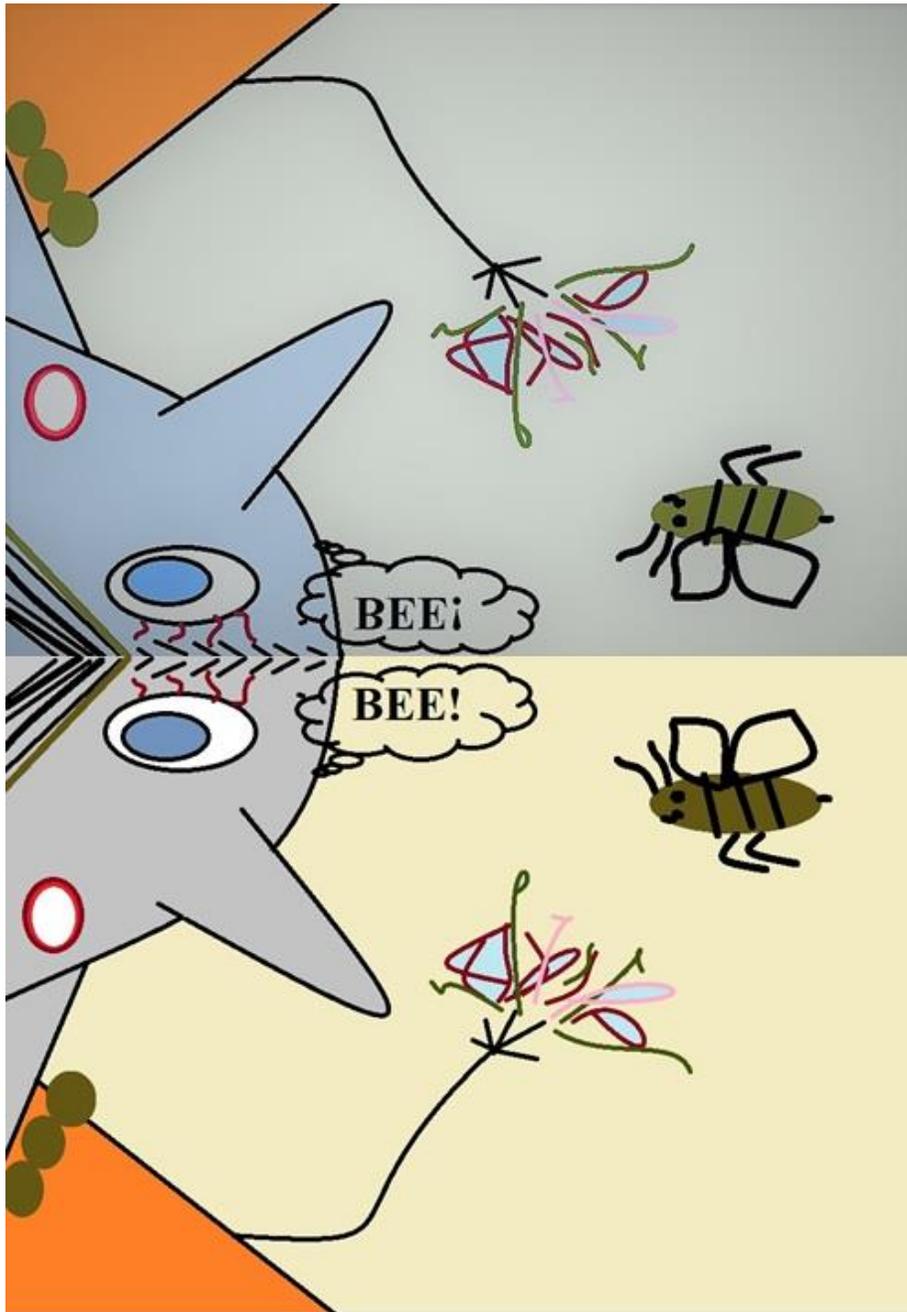
## **Little Goat So Frail - Carol Louise Moon**

I'm in love with this little goat  
so small and pale,  
                so frightened and frail—  
so afraid of his own shadow.  
Note his nervous hooves.

When cool winter winds blow  
he tucks his head,  
                heads for his shed  
by the church-house  
                in the meadow.

Originally published in *Brevities 169*, March 2017

## Yikes! --Terrie Jacks



Bees!  
Double Bees!  
Double the Hysteria!  
Double Run!  
RUN! RUN!  
SCREAM!  
LOUD,  
BLOODY MURDER!

## **sassy blast – Terrie Jacks**

gotta scrawl me sumthin'  
with a little sass  
to liven up the sassy  
gonna git me sum sassafras

careful of the bubbly  
in the sassafras  
or dem sassy spirits  
will gush a little blast

**Senryu --John J. Han, On the Edge**

autumn emptiness  
I left home wearing pants  
without a belt

snow day  
happy students forget  
they paid tuition

negative campaigns  
there's no one to choose  
per the candidates

buying sugarless cereal  
I end up adding  
sugar

salmon swimming upstream  
I read a book  
backwards

finals week dream  
the tour bus departs  
without me

he used to say  
she had saved his life  
he's dead now

beach mystery—  
for hours no one goes  
to the restroom

all is vanity

my favorite team's loss  
is national news

family party  
pleasant talks mixed  
with barbed wire

## **Traffic Senryu --John J. Han, On the Edge**

road shoulder  
a man checks a stalled car  
baring his butt crack

gas station men's room  
the best-selling product:  
Rough Rider

lost in Chicago  
for an hour  
I still return there

once blocked, always blocked  
waiting at red traffic lights  
all the way to work

futile tailgating  
the car goes ten miles an hour  
at each turn

Monday morning  
a dozen drivers pass by  
no one smiles

## **This Season – Todd Sukany**

May we all ride first class aboard the blessing train.  
Pastor and Peaches use a familiar *God Bless You*  
after every grocery purchase. Honestly, Mark

probably checks each trike lane, twice,  
before shifting into another suburban merge.  
That driver on the interstate, waving

a single finger as a directional signal,  
must have missed the memo. Pat and Pat  
spread their words *o u t*, month after month,

and frequently share the click-here-to-smile button  
God is back on prime-time television, via cameo,  
but He still thinks we can keep Christ in Christmas.

Clichés must start somewhere.

Let Larry and Mortiz lead the way . . .

*And may Beauty plump up your pillow!*

## **A TUMULTUOUS TIME -- Ted Badger**

This earth that humans inhabit  
has at our hands been grievously  
damaged, scarred, depleted, defaced  
as we've exploited its bounty,  
polluting both air and water  
with endless smoke, mounting garbage  
that overwhelms us by question:  
Where can we stash all of our trash?

In addition to wounding earth,  
we hurt and kill other humans,  
depriving them of precious life.  
We murder people at worship,  
or at a musical concert,  
or gathered in a school classroom,  
or at a random assembly.  
Why are we so imbecilic?

## **Waiting for Sophia at the Dance Studio - Brenda Conley**

Brenden reads

Olivia reads

And I read

*The Smart One,*

a novel about a teacher

As the hour passed, Olivia handed me a

National Geographic children's book

about snakes

and asked,

*Grandma, could you read this to me?*

As Sophia danced,

With Brenden on my lap,

Olivia at my side,

I read the stories of

The boa constrictor

Snakes in the forest

Snakes in the jungle.

When I finished,

Brenden looked into my eyes

with deep admiration

and said,

*Grandma, when you read that book*

*It sounds like poetry.*

-- Honorary Lifetime Member, Kansas City, Missouri

## **PRAYER - Sandra L Knife**

YOU HOPE AND YOU PRAY  
YOU WAIT EVERYDAY  
THE SPIRIT IT DAMPENS  
TIL WONDEROUS THINGS  
START TO HAPPEN

LIFE GETS EASY TO BARE  
YOU START TO OPEN AND SHARE  
FRIENDS NOW SEEM TO CARE  
YOU'RE NO WORSE FOR THE WARE

HAVING A VERY GOOD YEAR  
MAYBE SOMEONE DID HEAR

## **Passing Through- Frank Adams**

All that lives  
will die.  
The future  
is always ahead of us-  
and the past, is always over.  
Time moves forward  
not backwards. There is  
never any going back.  
Nothing here is permanent.  
This moment  
is all there is.

--Member at Large

## **SCARY -- Pat Laster**

We wouldn't dread to open icebox doors  
if things inside were only mold and spores,  
not five-inch bugs, a shredded hobby horse,  
or dentures soaking in a dirty dish,  
a pile of ursine feces, wrapped, of course,  
collected for the Fish and Game Commish . . .  
If things inside were only mold and spores,  
we wouldn't dread to open icebox doors.

--Merry Bombadils

## **Christmas Card -- Marie Asner**

Sending you a memory  
of a Northern Minnesota winter  
with crystalline frost that was  
silent and diamond beautiful.  
Our wolves, who were to have vanished  
years ago, still howled when snow  
was falling heavy as a mantle on the land.  
At sunset, if you were in the back pasture,  
motionless...covered with frost,  
you could, sometimes, see them along the tree line,  
moving softer than a shadow  
and eyes that shone prism green for an instant,  
like the twilight flash on the horizon  
of a Southern sea...and then was gone.

--Merry Bombadils Chapter

# SPARE MULE

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